

Appendix C

Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program

The SpecialQuest Continuous Improvement Process

What Is Continuous Improvement?

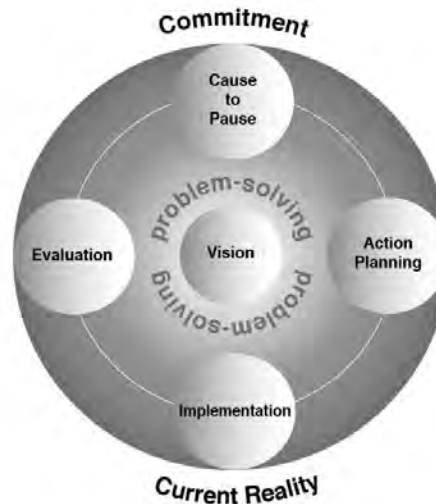
Continuous improvement efforts are intended to provide two things: timely feedback on program processes to allow for swift adjustments and planning information to program staff to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery.

What Does Continuous Improvement Mean for the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program?

Continuous improvement is a component of every aspect of the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program and is used to provide a systematic, data-driven guide for both day-to-day and long-term decision-making. A variety of strategies are used to take stock of where we stand as a program, track progress on our goals, evaluate our strengths and weaknesses, identify obstacles to our goals, reflect on our current successes, and identify further resources and information needed. Continuous improvement encourages the involvement of staff and other stakeholders in assessing and adjusting program objectives and implementation strategies based on feedback. Within the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program, staff is involved in problem-solving processes aimed at identifying current issues, planning responsive approaches, implementing new strategies, and analyzing the impact of these ideas. One of the major purposes of the Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program is to model approaches and practices that provide ongoing feedback and support change within individuals, teams, and organizations.

In order to sustain change, there must be emphasis on how teams work together. As a part of this teaming, it is important to use a continuous improvement process to assess the implementation of specific strategies that ensure change is sustained, regardless of who is part of the organization or if the organization has external support, such as that provided by the SpecialQuest training and the follow-up provided by learning coaches.

The SpecialQuest Continuous Improvement Process is an ongoing cycle that is designed to engage teams in a planned process to create sustainable change.



As illustrated in the graphic, the elements of the SpecialQuest Continuous Improvement Process are cyclical.

Vision:

The central focus of the SpecialQuest Continuous Improvement Process is a team's vision of services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

Commitment:

A shared commitment to quality inclusive services, combined with a clear vision, guides teams and communities in making sustainable change.

Current Reality:

In order to create movement toward the vision, teams need to examine the current reality, specifically examining the practices in place that are either supports or barriers to quality inclusion in their community. The current reality should include the viewpoints of diverse stakeholders in the community, including families and key service providers, so that a full picture of the service delivery system is gathered.

Problem-Solving Process:

During each stage of the Continuous Improvement Process, it is necessary for teams to engage in a problem-solving process. The essential components of this problem-solving include brainstorming, analyzing possible solutions, and consensus building. This process ensures that all views are discussed and that the decisions made are ones that all team members agree on. Each child and family is

unique and brings individual strengths and issues requiring a tailored response—there is no “one way” to collaboratively serve infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in inclusive settings. Every community has a diverse set of resources and challenges. Combining the resources to address the challenges facing families of infants and toddlers with disabilities, the service delivery system, and the community as a whole requires creative, responsive, and collaborative teamwork.

Causes to Pause:

Issues that inevitably arise which make teams stop and think are referred to as Causes to Pause.

Action Plans:

Action Plans are developed by teams to address identified Causes to Pause.

Implementation:

Teams implement the Action Plans back in their programs and communities.

Evaluation:

Teams evaluate their progress or check to see if what they are doing is achieving the desired outcomes. They might use a process of identifying what is working and any suggestions for improvement. They then use the problem-solving process to make necessary course corrections to make their services most effective for the infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in their community.